

Maryland Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – 10/25/2014



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office for Children
301 West Preston St., Suite 1502,
Baltimore, MD 21201

Senator Roger Manno, *Co-Chair*
Delegate John A. Olszewski, Jr., *Co-Chair*
Christina Drushel Williams, *Co-Chair*

Gayon Sampson, *Co-Chair*
Kennard Wallace, *Vice-Chair*
Likhitha Butchireddygar, *Secretary*

General Meeting October 25, 2014

**Baltimore County White Marsh Library
8133 Sandpiper Circle, Baltimore, MD 21236**

In Attendance

Council Members:

Alisha Desai
Alison Smith
Allison Wachen
Anna Selbrede
Brandon Wharton
Camille Kirsch
Curtis Swanson
David Gevarter
Dawnya Johnson
Eric Zhao
Ian McGrory
Ifetayo Kitwala

Jeremy Price
Joe Coale
Joshua Becker
Kendall Hamlin
Likhitha Butchireddygar
Maggie Chen
Matthew Saxton
Medha Reddy
Nihimlolu Fatinikun
Noelle Dayal
Omisa Jinsi
Randi Williams
Reines Maliksi

Sydney Young
Thorne Lindsey
Tierra Harris
Viswanath Gorti
Zac McGee

Co-Chairs:

Gayon Sampson
Christina Drushel Williams
Michael Hawkins

Guests:

Missy Ronan
Pierce Jaffri

Community Conversations Training

1. Youth as Resources: Baltimore's youth led non-profit grant making organization. They give grants that range from \$500 to \$3500 to youth that would like to improve their communities. These projects must be completely facilitated by youth.
2. Overview of Community Conversations
 - Our Thoughts:
 - Representation from all groups of the community
 - Every person from each home comes to the meeting
 - An opportunity for people from within a specific community to express their ideas on a specific topic so that the people in that community can collaborate on an action plan
 - Young people can be in their own community

Maryland Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – 10/25/2014

- Actual: A community conversation is a facilitated, guided discussion aimed to engage the community in identifying the most pressing problems and identifying actions to address this problem
3. Goals of community conversations
- Our Thoughts:
 - Find out the problems that might have been overlooked and then to figure what the possible solutions are
 - To think about how to address the issues
 - If it is structured around a certain issue that involves two groups, community conversations can be used to facilitate mediation
 - Actual: The goal of a community conversation is to group ideas together to come up actions to address the problems.
4. Facilitation
- Our Thoughts:
 - Modeling and organizing thoughts.
 - Keeping the conversations going.
 - Actual: Facilitation serves the needs of any group who are meeting with a common purpose, whether it be making a decision, solving a problem, or simply exchanging ideas and information. It does not lead the group, nor does it try to distract or entertain.
5. Facilitator: Someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to plan to achieve them without taking a particular position in the discussion.
6. Facilitation Tips and Tricks:
- Introduce what you are going to cover: helps people understand what is in store
 - Use visuals: some people are visual learners
 - Maintain neutrality: be unbiased, don't encourage frivolity
 - Be a spontaneous thinker when necessary: often times, things go wrong, so be ready to correct the situation
 - Smile: helps create a positive environment
 - Use eye contact: helps gauge interest and engages audience
 - Speak slowly and confidently: clarifies the content
 - Keep it short and simple: creates most efficient facilitation
 - Corny is cute: it's a good memory trick
 - Involve your audience: "draw them out" by asking questions and "check in" before you move on, helps gauge understanding
7. Outline of a Community Conversations
- Assets: What do you like about your neighborhood, what are some of the goods things?
 - Problems: What do you think are some problems in your neighborhood, community, school and/or Baltimore?

Maryland Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – 10/25/2014

- Causes: What causes those problems? Why are things that way? Why it is so? In other words, if violence is a problem, why are people violent? Keep asking why?
- Solutions: What are some ideas you have to address some of those causes? What can we do together to address some of these causes?
 - What demands can we make? Who has the power to meet those demands? These are your targets.
 - Who else cares about this? What do we want to ask them to do? These are your allies.
- Developing a Plan: What actions do we want to take? What can we do to influence those with the power to meet our demands? What do we want to first, next, etc.? Who is going to do it, by when? What do we need to get it done? What do we already have? This will help you develop a budget.
- Questions:
 - How general or specific do the conversations get?
 - It is really up to the group.
 - Are the asset walks necessary?
 - No, the assets/problems walks aren't necessary.
 - What are some barriers you have encountered and how have you dealt with them?
 - Some people don't think they have power to enact change, so you have to explain to them that they have power in numbers.
 - What do you do if one or two people are dominating the conversation?
 - Under participators:
 - Round robins
 - Small groups
 - Pre-set a role, forewarning
 - Ask for feedback without putting anyone on the spot
 - Use phrases like: tell me more
 - Ask everyone to write down their thoughts
 - Introverts take seven seconds longer to respond, live with silence
 - Don't ask yes or no questions
 - Over participators:
 - Round robins
 - Everyone gets first before seconds
 - Scribe or some other non-verbal role
 - Diplomacy – let's hear from those who have not spoken
 - Time keeping
 - Pass throw an object/group picks the next one to talk
 - What do you do if the group consensus doesn't match your perspective?
 - Deal with it. It is the group's prerogative to decide what they want done.
 - What if the solutions aren't realistic?
 - Tell them it's not realistic and lead them in a new direction
 - How young are kids you work with?

Maryland Youth Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – 10/25/2014

- They are around seven.

Community Conversation Planning

- How do we find locations to hold conversations?
 - Christina can help find space.
 - Zachary McGee, President of University System of Maryland Student Council can also help locate space.
- What is our paradigm?
 - Goal is to have a community conversation in every county represented.

Discussion and Approval of By-Laws

- See Attached By-Laws with Approved Changes.
- Synopsis:
 - Sections changed to articles and subsections changed to sections.
 - Many grammar/ parallel structure changes.
 - Added roles to Co-Chair position from Secretary position.
 - Robert's Rules of Order is still present.
 - Article V. Executive Board Duties has not been approved, due to necessary further discussion by the Executive Board.

Next Steps and Announcements

- Please get Code of Conduct/ Photo Release form signed.
- Christina Drushel Williams will be going on maternity leave sometime this year, so all communication will be done through Michael Hawkins.
- Plan your community conversations through your county.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting

- Saturday, December 13th, 2014, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm: Location TBD.